



# Australian Bureau of Statistics

## 6206.0 - Labour Force Experience, Australia, February 2009

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## Summary

### Main Features

#### NOTES

##### ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

This publication presents information about the labour force experience of people aged 15 years and over during the 12 months ending February 2009. It presents information about time spent in labour force activities, including episodes of working or looking for work, and time spent out of the labour force.

The statistics in this publication were compiled from data collected in the Labour Force Experience Survey conducted throughout Australia in February 2009 as a supplement to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) monthly Labour Force Survey (LFS).

For this publication, labour force activity over a 12-month period was determined from a more limited set of questions than is used in the monthly Labour Force Survey (LFS). For this reason, the terms **worked** and **looked for work** are used, rather than the more precisely defined terms **employed** and **unemployed**, as used in the LFS. In this survey, the concepts **worked** and **looked for work** are used to determine whether a person was **in the labour force during the year**. Therefore, this concept is also based on a more limited set of questions than the Labour Force Survey.

Labour force experience relates to a person's labour force activities over a 12-month period. Labour force activity consists of either working or looking for work.

This survey measured the number of weeks in which people were engaged in these labour force activities during the year, the number of spells of looking for work during the year and the main activity of people when not in the labour force.

##### NOTES ABOUT THE ESTIMATES

As a result of the sample reductions in the Labour Force Survey, (see Information Paper: **Labour Force Survey Sample Design, Nov 2007 (Second edition) (cat. no. 6269.0)**) the sample for the Labour Force Experience Survey was approximately one-third smaller than the sample size in February 2007. The reduced sample will still be representative, with selections made across all parts of Australia.

This has resulted in higher relative standard errors associated with the estimates. See the Technical Note for more details.

## CHANGES IN THIS ISSUE

Changes made to the categories for the data item 'Main activity when not in the Labour Force' have affected its comparability with previous years data. Users need to exercise caution when comparing estimates from 2009 with previous years. More details of this change, including the impact on the estimates are provided in paragraphs 18 and 19 of the Explanatory Notes.

Some of the publication tables have been expanded to incorporate time series tables for persons aged 15 years and over. As a result the order in which the tables are presented have been rearranged.

## ROUNDING

As estimates have been rounded, discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and totals.

## INQUIRIES

For further information about these and related statistics, contact the National Information and Referral Service on 1300 135 070 or Labour Market Statistics Section on Canberra (02) 6252 7206.

# Conceptual Framework

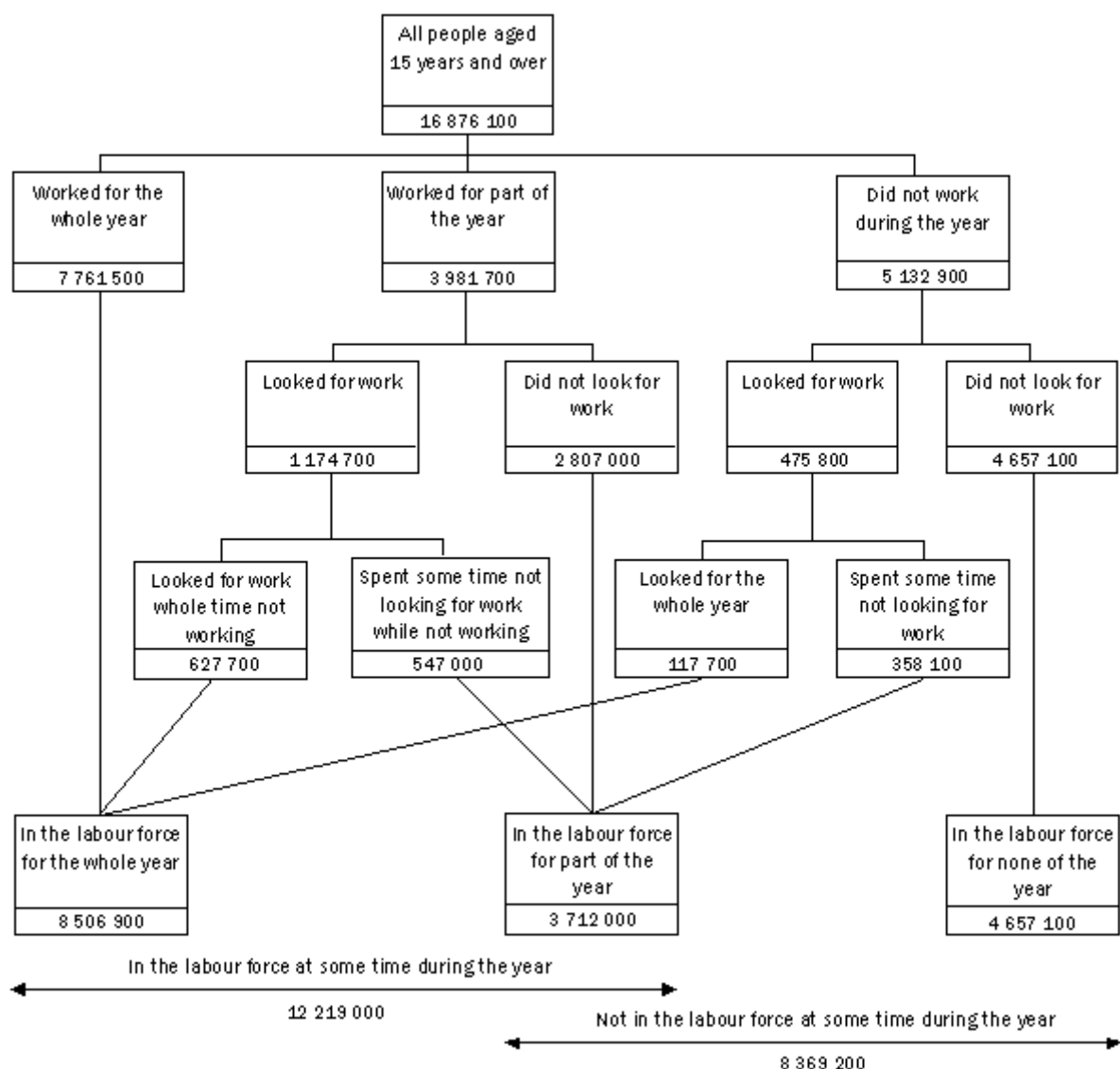
## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The following diagram illustrates the conceptual framework for the Labour Force Experience Survey. People aged 15 years and over were classified according to their labour force activity over a 12-month period, that is, whether they were working or looking for work.

The framework firstly differentiates between people who worked for the whole year, part of the year or did not work during the year. People who worked part of the year or did not work during the year were asked whether they looked for work during the year. People who looked for work were also asked about the time they spent looking for work.

Note that the terms **worked** and **looked for work** are not the same as the more precisely defined terms **employed** and **unemployed**, which are used in the monthly Labour Force Survey to describe current labour force status. See the Glossary for the definitions of these terms.



## Summary of Findings

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

#### ALL PEOPLE

In February 2009, there were 16.9 million people aged 15 years and over. During the 12 months to February 2009, 74% of these people did not change their labour force status. Other characteristics of people aged 15 years and over at February 2009 included:

- 11.7 million people worked at some time during the year, of whom 7.8 million (66%) spent the whole year working
- 1.7 million people looked for work at some time during the year, of whom 117,700 (7%) spent the whole year looking for work
- 8.4 million people were classified as 'Not in the labour force' at some time during the year, of whom 4.7 million (56%) remained 'Not in the labour force' for the whole of this 12 month period.

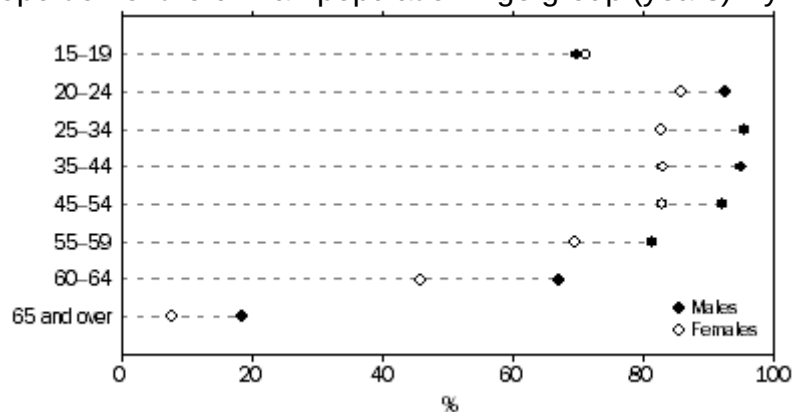
## Participation in the labour force

There were just over 12.2 million people aged 15 years and over who participated in the labour force at some time during the year ending February 2009 (78% of men and 67% of women). That is, 72% of Australians aged 15 years and over either worked or looked for work at some time during this period, which was similar to the 12 months ending February 2007 (71%).

Of the people who were in the labour force at some time during the 12 month ending February 2009, 70% spent the whole year in the labour force and 17% spent from 39 to under 52 weeks in the labour force.

The age groups with the highest proportion of participation in the labour force at some time during the year ending February 2009 were those aged 20-24 years, 25-34 years and 35-44 years (each 89%). They were followed by those aged 45-54 years (88%).

**LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION DURING THE YEAR ENDING FEBRUARY 2009,**  
Proportion of the civilian population-Age group (years)-By sex



Men participated at a higher rate than women in all age groups except for those aged 15-19 years in which women participated at a slightly higher rate (71%) than men (70%). The age group with the highest rate of participation in the labour force for men were those in the 25-34 year age group (96%), whilst for women it was those in the 20-24 year age group (86%).

## PEOPLE WHO WORKED AT SOME TIME DURING THE YEAR

There were 11.7 million people aged 15 years and over who worked at some time during the year ending February 2009. Of these, 6.3 million (54%) were men and 5.4 million (46%) were women. Over two thirds of these men (70%) worked for the entire 52 weeks, compared to 62% of women.

Of those people who worked at some time during the year ending February 2009:

- 66% only worked full-time hours (78% of men and 51% of women)
- 25% only worked part-time hours (14% of men and 38% of women)
- 9% worked a combination of full-time and part-time hours (8% of men and 11% of women).

Over three-quarters (79%) of people who only worked full-time hours worked for the whole year, compared to 40% of people who only worked part-time hours.

Over three quarters of people (79%) who worked at some time during the year ending February 2009 had only one employer or business during these 12 months. Just over one fifth (21%) of people who only worked part-time hours had two or more employers or businesses during the year, compared to 18% of people who only worked full-time.

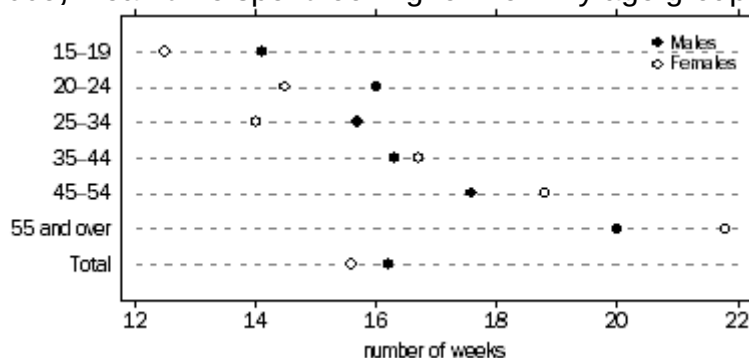
## PEOPLE WHO LOOKED FOR WORK AT SOME TIME DURING THE YEAR

There were 1.7 million people aged 15 years and over who looked for work at some time during the year ending February 2009 (856,400 men and 794,000 women). Almost three-quarters of these people (71%) had also worked during the year.

Of those people who looked for work at some time during this 12 month period:

- 20% looked for work for 1 and under 4 weeks
- 39% looked for work for 4 and under 13 weeks
- 15% looked for work for 13 and under 26 weeks
- 18% looked for work for 26 and under 52 weeks and 7% looked for the whole year
- 75% had 1 spell looking for work
- 12% had 2 spells looking for work
- 13% had 3 or more spells looking for work.

## PERSONS WHO LOOKED FOR WORK AT SOME TIME DURING THE YEAR ENDING FEBRUARY 2009, Mean time spent looking for work-By age group (years)-By sex



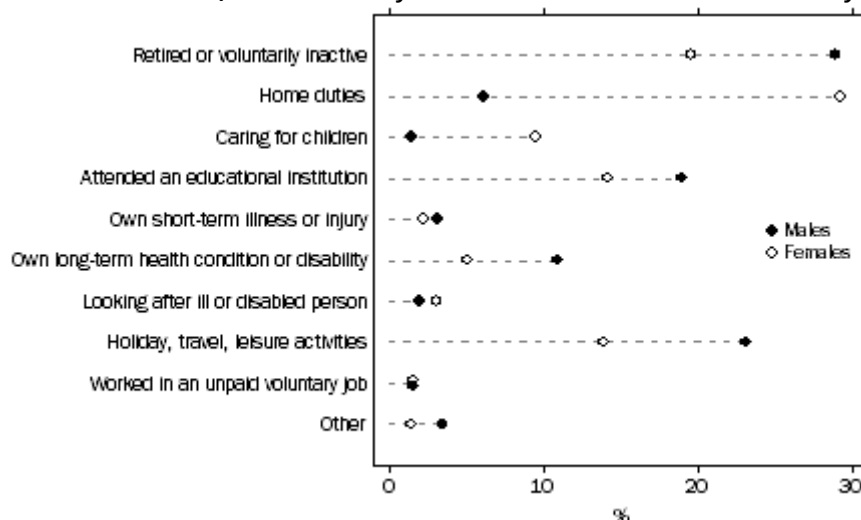
The mean (average) duration of time spent looking for work was 15.9 weeks up from 15.7 weeks in 2007. On average, women who looked for work spent less time doing so (15.6 weeks) than men (16.2 weeks). On average, people aged 55 years and over spent the most time looking for work (20.8 weeks), while people aged 15-19 years spent, on average, the least time (13.3 weeks).

## PEOPLE WHO WERE NOT IN THE LABOUR FORCE AT SOME TIME DURING THE YEAR

There were 8.4 million people aged 15 years and over who were not in the labour force at some time during the year ending February 2009 (42% were men and 58% were women). Of these, over half (56%) remained not in the labour force for the whole of this 12 month period, and 25% were not in the labour force for between 1 and under 13 weeks.

## PERSONS NOT IN THE LABOUR FORCE AT SOME TIME DURING THE YEAR ENDING

## FEBRUARY 2009, Main activity while not in the labour force-By sex



The main activities most commonly reported by people while not in the labour force were:

- 'Retired or voluntarily inactive' (29% of men and 20% women)
- 'Home duties' (6% of men and 29% of women)
- 'Holiday, travel or leisure activities' (23% of men and 14% of women)
- 'Attended an educational institution' (19% of men and 14% of women).

## About this Release

Provides information on the labour force experience of persons aged 15 years and over during the year prior to the survey. Labour force experience can be described in terms of labour force activities undertaken by persons in a 12-month period, namely working and looking for work. Details include the number of weeks spent working, looking for work, or out of the labour force during the year. Estimates can be cross-classified by labour force demographics such as state, sex, age and marital status and birthplace.

# Explanatory Notes

## Explanatory Notes

### EXPLANATORY NOTES

#### INTRODUCTION

**1** The statistics in this publication were compiled from data collected in the Labour Force Experience Survey that was conducted throughout Australia in February 2009 as a supplement to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) monthly Labour Force Survey (LFS). Respondents to the LFS who were in scope of the supplementary survey were asked

further questions.

**2** The publication **Labour Force, Australia (cat. no. 6202.0)** contains information about survey design, sample redesign, scope, coverage and population benchmarks relevant to the monthly LFS, which also apply to supplementary surveys. It also contains definitions of demographic and labour force characteristics, and information about telephone interviewing, relevant to both the monthly LFS and supplementary surveys.

## **CONCEPTS SOURCES AND METHODS**

**3** The conceptual framework used in Australia's LFS aligns closely with the standards and guidelines set out in Resolutions of the International Conference of Labour Statisticians. Descriptions of the underlying concepts and structure of Australia's labour force statistics, and the sources and methods used in compiling these estimates, are presented in **Labour Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Methods (cat. no. 6102.0.55.001)**.

## **SCOPE**

**4** The scope of the LFS is restricted to people aged 15 years and over and excludes:

- members of the permanent defence forces
- certain diplomatic personnel of overseas governments, customarily excluded from census and estimated populations
- overseas residents in Australia
- members of non-Australian defence forces (and their dependants).

**5** Students at boarding schools, patients in hospitals, residents of homes (e.g. retirement homes, homes for people with disabilities), and inmates of prisons are excluded from all supplementary surveys.

**6** This supplementary survey was conducted in both urban and rural areas in all states and territories, but excluded people living in Indigenous communities in very remote parts of Australia. Visitors to private dwellings are also excluded from this survey.

## **COVERAGE**

**7** The estimates in this publication relate to people covered by the survey in February 2009. In the LFS, coverage rules are applied which aim to ensure that each person is associated with only one dwelling and hence has only one chance of selection in the survey. See **Labour Force, Australia (cat. no. 6202.0)** for more details.

## **SAMPLE SIZE**

**8** Supplementary surveys are not conducted on the full LFS sample. Since August 1994 the sample for supplementary surveys has been restricted to no more than seven-eighths of the LFS sample.

**9** The LFS sample size in February 2009 was approximately one-third smaller than the sample size in February 2007. This is due to an 11% sample reduction that was implemented from November 2007 to June 2008 based on the 2006 sample design, and an

additional 24% sample reduction implemented in July 2008. The reduced sample will still be representative, with selections made across all parts of Australia. More information is provided in Information Paper: **Labour Force Survey Sample Design, Nov 2007 (Second edition)** (cat. no. 6269.0).

**10** The initial sample for the February 2009 LFS consisted of 27,549 private dwelling households and special dwelling units. Of the 22,286 private dwelling households and special dwelling units that remained in the survey after sample loss (e.g. households selected in the survey which had no residents in scope for the LFS, vacant or derelict dwellings and dwellings under construction), approximately 21,253 or 95.4%, were fully responding to the Labour Force Experience Survey. The number of completed interviews obtained from these private dwellings and special dwelling units (after taking into account scope, coverage and sub-sampling exclusions) was 35,634.

## **RELIABILITY OF THE ESTIMATES**

**11** Estimates in this publication are subject to sampling and non-sampling errors:

- Sampling error is the difference between the published estimate and the value that would have been produced if all dwellings had been included in the survey. For more information see the Technical Note.
- Non-sampling errors are inaccuracies that occur because of imperfections in reporting by respondents and interviewers and errors made in coding and processing data. These inaccuracies may occur in any enumeration, whether it be a full count or a sample. Every effort is made to reduce the non-sampling error to a minimum by careful design of questionnaires, intensive training and supervision of interviewers and efficient processing procedures.

## **SEASONAL FACTORS**

**12** The estimates are based on information collected in the survey month, and, due to seasonal factors, may not be representative of other months of the year.

## **CLASSIFICATIONS USED**

**13** Country of birth data are classified according to the **Standard Australian Classification of Countries (SACC), 1998 (cat. no. 1269.0)**.

**14** Occupation data are classified according to the **ANZSCO - Australian and New Zealand Standard Classifications of Occupations, First Edition, 2006 (cat.no. 1220.0)**.

**15** Industry data are classified according to **Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC), 2006 (cat.no. 1292.0)**.

## **COMPARABILITY OF TIME SERIES**

**16** Revisions are made to population benchmarks for the LFS after each five-yearly Census of Population and Housing. The last such revision was made in February 2009 to take account of the results of the 2006 Census of Population and Housing. Estimates from supplementary surveys conducted from and including February 2009 are therefore based on



these 2006 population benchmarks.

**17** The scope of the Labour Force Experience Survey was expanded in February 2007 to include all people aged 15 years and over. In this issue, Tables 1 and 5 have been revised to present the new time series for people 15 years and over for 2007 and 2009. Tables 9, 10 and 11 of this issue continue the time series for persons aged 15-69 years.

**18** Prior to February 2009, the data item 'Main activity when not in the Labour Force' included the category 'home duties or child care'. From February 2009, this category has been split into two separate categories; 'home duties' and 'caring for children'.

**19** Prior to February 2009, the data item 'Main activity when not in the Labour Force' included the categories 'own illness or injury' and 'own disability or handicap'. From February 2009, these categories have been collected as 'own short-term illness or injury' and 'own long-term health condition or disability' respectively. While the way the interviewers were instructed to code the responses to the relevant categories did not conceptually change, the renaming has caused a break in time series. Users need to exercise caution when comparing estimates from 2009 with previous years' data. The following table shows a comparison of the renamed categories between 2007 and 2009.

#### **All Persons, Main activity when not in the Labour Force - 2007 and 2009**

	2009			2007	
	000	%		000	%
Main activity when not in the Labour force					
Own short-term illness or injury	224.7	26.2	Own illness or injury	504.4	59.9
Own long-term health condition or disability	634.1	73.8	Own disability or handicap	338.2	40.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>858.8</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>842.6</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## **COMPARABILITY WITH MONTHLY LFS STATISTICS**

**20** Due to differences in the scope and sample size of this supplementary survey and that of the LFS, the estimation procedure may lead to some small variations between labour force estimates from this survey and those from the LFS.

## **PREVIOUS SURVEYS**

**21** Results of similar surveys, conducted in February 1969, 1973, 1975, 1976, 1977, annually from February 1979 to February 1989, annually from March 1990 to March 1994, and in February 1995, 1997, 1999, 2001, 2003, 2005 and 2007 have been given in previous issues of the publication **Labour Force Experience, Australia (cat. no. 6206.0)** and the Standard Data Service Labour Force Experience on Hardcopy, Australia (cat. no. 6206.0.40.001).

## **NEXT SURVEY**

**22** The ABS plans to conduct this survey again in February 2011.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

**23** ABS publications draw extensively on information provided freely by individuals, businesses, governments and other organisations. Their continued cooperation is very much appreciated: without it, the wide range of statistics published by the ABS would not be available. Information received by the ABS is treated in strict confidence as required by the **Census and Statistics Act 1905**.

## RELATED PUBLICATIONS

**24** ABS publications which may also be of interest include:

- **Career Experience, Australia (cat. no. 6254.0)**
- **Job Search Experience, Australia (cat. no. 6222.0)**
- **Labour Force, Australia (cat. no. 6202.0)**
- **Labour Mobility, Australia (cat. no. 6209.0)**
- **Labour Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Methods (cat. no. 6102.0.55.001)**
- **Persons Not in the Labour Force, Australia (cat. no. 6220.0)**
- **Australian Labour Market Statistics (cat. no. 6105.0)**.

**25** Current publications and other products released by the ABS are available from the [Statistics page](#) on the ABS website. The ABS also issues a daily [Release Advice](#) on the web site which details products to be released in the week ahead.

# Glossary

## GLOSSARY

### Employed

People aged 15 years and over who, during the reference week:

- worked for one hour or more for pay, profit, commission or payment in kind, in a job or business or on a farm (comprising employees, employers and own account workers); or
- worked for one hour or more without pay in a family business or on a farm (i.e. contributing family workers); or
- were employees who had a job but were not at work and were:
  - away from work for less than four weeks up to the end of the reference week; or
  - away from work for more than four weeks up to the end of the reference week and received pay for some or all of the four week period to the end of the reference week; or
  - away from work as a standard work or shift arrangement; or
  - on strike or locked out; or
  - on workers' compensation and expected to return to their job; or
- were employers or own account workers who had a job, business or farm, but were not at work.

## **Industry of main job**

In this publication, industry of main job refers to ANZSIC Division as classified according to the **Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC), 2006 (cat. no. 1292.0)**.

## **In the labour force at some time during the year**

People who had worked or looked for work for one week or more during the year. Note that the specific criteria used to determine whether a person was employed or actively looked for work, according to the LFS, were not applied.

## **In the labour force for the whole year**

People who had either worked or looked for work every week for the whole year. Note that the specific criteria used to determine whether a person was employed or actively looked for work, according to the LFS, were not applied.

## **In the labour force for part of the year**

People who had either worked or looked for work for one week or more during the year, but had some weeks when neither activity was undertaken. Note that the specific criteria used to determine whether a person was employed or actively looked for work, according to the LFS, were not applied.

## **Looked for work at some time during the year**

People who looked for work for one week or more during the year. Note that the specific criteria used to determine whether a person actively looked for work, according to the LFS, were not applied.

## **Main English-speaking countries**

The list of main English-speaking countries provided here is not an attempt to classify countries on the basis of whether or not English is the predominant or official language of each country. It is a list of the main countries from which Australia receives, or has received, significant numbers of overseas settlers who are likely to speak English. These countries comprise the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa and the United States of America.

## **Mean duration of time spent looking for work**

Obtained by dividing the aggregate number of weeks a group has been looking for work by the number of people in that group.

## **Median duration of time spent looking for work**

The duration which divides people who looked for work into two equal groups, one comprising people whose time spent looking for work during the year is above the median, and the other, people whose time spent looking is below it.

## **Not in the labour force at some time during the year**

People who had neither worked nor looked for work for one week or more during the year. Note that the specific criteria used to determine whether a person was employed or actively

looked for work, according to the LFS, were not applied.

### **Number of employers/businesses during the year**

The number of employers/businesses a person worked for during the year.

### **Number of spells of looking for work during the year**

The number of different periods, including the current period, during which a person was not working but was looking for a job.

### **Occupation of main job**

In this publication, occupation of main job refers to Major Group as defined by the **ANZSCO - Australian Standard Classification of Occupations, First Edition, 2006 (cat. no. 1220.0)**.

### **Time in the labour force during the year**

The total number of weeks a person reported having either worked or looked for work during the previous year. Note that the specific criteria used to determine whether a person was employed or actively looked for work, according to the LFS, were not applied.

### **Time not in the labour force during the year**

The total number of weeks a person reported having neither worked nor looked for work during the previous year. Note that the specific criteria used to determine whether a person was employed or actively looked for work, according to the LFS, were not applied.

### **Time spent looking for work during the year**

The total number of weeks a person spent looking for work, while not working.

### **Time worked during the year**

The total number of weeks a person reported having either worked or been on paid leave. Periods of one week or more on strike or time off without pay are not classified as time worked.

### **Time worked full time during the year**

The total number of weeks a person reported as having either worked or been on paid leave during the year, minus any weeks during the year where they reported working part time.

### **Time worked part time during the year**

The response given by a respondent to the question 'For how many weeks did you work part time?'.

### **Unemployed**

People aged 15 years and over who were not employed during the reference week, and:

- had actively looked for full time or part time work at any time in the four weeks up to the end of the reference week and were available for work in the reference week; or

- were waiting to start a new job within four weeks from the end of the reference week and could have started in the reference week if the job had been available then.

## **Worked**

Activity in a job, business or farm, for pay, profit, commission or payment in kind; or any activity in a family business that contributed to the operation of that business although no payment was received. Includes being absent, but on paid leave, from such activity. Note that the specific criteria used to determine whether a person was employed, according to the LFS, were not applied.

## **Worked at some time during the year**

People who reported having worked and/or been on paid leave for one week or more during the year.

## **Worked for part of the year**

People who reported having worked and/or been on paid leave for part of the year.

# **Abbreviations**

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

The following symbols and abbreviations are used in this publication:

'000	thousand
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ANZSCO	Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations
ANZSIC	Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification
cat. no.	Catalogue number
LFS	Labour Force Survey
RSE	relative standard error
SACC	Standard Australian Classification of Countries
SE	standard error
wks	weeks

# **Populations And Data Items List (Appendix)**

## **APPENDIX 1 POPULATIONS AND DATA ITEMS LIST**

## **DATA AVAILABLE ON REQUEST**

The ABS has a range of data available on request from the Labour Force Experience

Survey. This section lists the data items and populations which relate to the survey. More detailed breakdowns of some data items may also be available on request.

The population(s) for a particular data item refers to the people in the survey to whom the data relates. Where alternative output categories are available for the same data item, these are shown and the data item name is followed by a bracketed numeral (e.g. Country of birth (2)).

For more information about ABS data available on request, contact Labour Market Statistics Section on Canberra (02) 6252 7206, or by facsimile on (02) 6252 7102, or by email to [labour.statistics@abs.gov.au](mailto:labour.statistics@abs.gov.au).

## **Population 1**

All persons

## **Population 2**

Persons in the labour force at some time during the year ending February 2009

## **Population 3**

Persons who worked at some time during the year ending February 2009

## **Population 4**

Persons who looked for work at some time during the year ending February 2009

## **Population 5**

Persons who were not in the labour force at some time during the year ending February 2009

<b>Data items</b>	<b>Populations</b>
1 State or territory of usual residence	All
New South Wales	
Victoria	
Queensland	
South Australia	
Western Australia	
Tasmania	
Northern Territory	
Australian Capital Territory	
2 Area of usual residence	All
Capital city	
Balance of state/territory	
3 Region of usual residence	All
Standard labour force dissemination regions	
4 Sex	All
Males	

	Females	
5	Marital status	All
	Married	
	Not married	
6	Relationship in household	All
	Family member	
	Husband, wife or partner	
	With dependants	
	Without dependants	
	Lone Parent	
	With dependants	
	Without dependants	
	Dependent student	
	Non-dependent child	
	Other related individual	
	Non-family member	
	Lone person	
	Not living alone	
	Relationship not determined	
7A	Country of birth and period of arrival	All
	Born in Australia	
	Born overseas	
	Arrived before 1971	
	Arrived 1971-1980	
	Arrived 1981-1990	
	Arrived 1991-2000	
	Arrived 2001 to survey date	
7B	Country of birth (1)	All
	Born in Australia	
	Born overseas	
	Born in main English-speaking countries	
	Born in other than main English-speaking countries	
7C	Country of birth (2)	All
	Born in Australia	
	Born overseas	
	Oceania and Antarctica	
	North-West Europe	
	Southern and Eastern Europe	
	North Africa and the Middle East	
	South-East Asia	
	North-East Asia	
	Southern and Central Asia	
	Americas	
	Sub-Saharan Africa	
8	Age group (years)	All
	15-19	
	20-24	
	25-34	
	35-44	
	45-54	
	55-59	
	60-64	
	65 and over	
	Note: Age collected in single years	
9	Labour force status at February 2009	All
	In the labour force	
	Working	
	Looking for work	
	Not in the labour force	
10	Status in employment at February 2009	All
	Working at February 2009	
	Employee	
	Employer	

	Own account worker	
	Contributing family worker	
	Not working at February 2009	
11	Full-time or part-time status at February 2009	All
	Working at February 2009	
	Full-time	
	Part-time	
	Not working at February 2009	
12	Industry at February 2009	All
	Working at February 2009	
	Agriculture, forestry and fishing	
	Mining	
	Manufacturing	
	Electricity, gas, water and waste supply	
	Construction	
	Wholesale trade	
	Retail trade	
	Accommodation and food services	
	Transport, postal and warehousing	
	Information media and telecommunications	
	Financial and insurance services	
	Rental, hiring and real estate services	
	Professional, scientific and technical services	
	Administrative and support services	
	Public administration and safety	
	Education and training	
	Health care and social assistance	
	Arts and recreation services	
	Other services	
	Not working at February 2009	
13	Occupation at February 2009	All
	Working at February 2009	
	Managers	
	Professionals	
	Associated professionals	
	Technicians and trades workers	
	Advanced clerical and service workers	
	Community and personal service workers	
	Clerical and administrative workers	
	Sales workers	
	Machinery operators and drivers	
	Labourers	
	Not working at February 2009	
14	Time in the labour force during the year	All
	In the labour force during the year	
	1 and under 4 weeks	
	4 and under 13 weeks	
	13 and under 26 weeks	
	26 and under 39 weeks	
	39 and under 52 weeks	
	52 weeks	
	In the labour force for none of the year	
15	Time worked during the year	All
	Worked at some time during the year	
	1 and under 4 weeks	
	4 and under 13 weeks	
	13 and under 26 weeks	
	26 and under 39 weeks	
	39 and under 52 weeks	



- 52 weeks  
 Worked for none of the year
- 16 Time not in the labour force during the year **All**  
 Not in the labour force at some time during the year  
 1 and under 4 weeks  
 4 and under 13 weeks  
 13 and under 26 weeks  
 26 and under 39 weeks  
 39 and under 52 weeks  
 52 weeks  
 In the labour force for whole year
- 17 Number of employers/ businesses during the year **All**  
 None  
 One  
 Two  
 Three  
 Four or more
- 18 Full-time or part-time status of time worked during the year **All**  
 Worked at some time during the year  
 All full-time  
 More full-time than part-time  
 Full-time same as part-time  
 More part-time than full-time  
 All part-time  
 Worked for none of the year
- 19 Time spent looking for work during the year **All**  
 Looked for work at some time during the year  
 1 and under 4 weeks  
 4 and under 13 weeks  
 13 and under 26 weeks  
 26 and under 39 weeks  
 39 and under 52 weeks  
 52 weeks  
 Did not look for work during the year
- 20 Number of spells of looking for work during the year **All**  
 None  
 One  
 Two  
 Three  
 Four or more
- 21 Main activity when not in the labour force **All**  
 Not in the labour force at some time during the year  
 Retired or voluntarily inactive  
 Home duties  
 Caring for children  
 Attended an educational institution  
 Own short-term illness or injury  
 Own long-term health condition or disability  
 Looking after ill or disabled person  
 Holiday, travel or leisure activities  
 Worked in an unpaid voluntary job  
 Other  
 In the labour force for whole year
- 22 Whether in the labour force at some time during the year **All**  
 In the labour force at some time during the year  
 For whole year

- For part of year  
In the labour force for none of the year
- 23 Whether looked for work at some time during the year All
- Looked for work at some time during the year
- For whole year  
For part of year
- 24 Whether worked at some time during the year All
- Worked at some time during the year
- For whole year  
For part of year
- Worked for none of the year
- 25 Time worked part-time during the year All
- Worked part-time at some time during the year
- 1 and under 4 weeks  
4 and under 13 weeks  
13 and under 26 weeks  
26 and under 39 weeks  
39 and under 52 weeks  
52 weeks
- Did not work part-time during the year
- 26 Time worked full-time during the year All
- Worked full-time at some time during the year
- 1 and under 4 weeks  
4 and under 13 weeks  
13 and under 26 weeks  
26 and under 39 weeks  
39 and under 52 weeks  
52 weeks
- Did not work full-time during the year
- 27 Whether had an unpaid absence from work during the year All
- Working at February 2009
- With current employer for one year or more
- Had an unpaid absence from work  
Did not have an unpaid absence from work
- With current employer for less than one year
- Had an unpaid absence from work  
Did not have an unpaid absence from work
- Not working at February 2009
- 28 Time worked with current employer/business All
- Working at February 2009
- Under 12 months
- Under 3 months  
3 and under 6 months  
6 and under 9 months  
9 and under 12 months
- 1 and under 2 years  
2 and under 3 years  
3 and under 5 years  
5 and under 10 years  
10 years and over
- 10 and under 20 years  
20 years and over

## Supplementary Surveys (Appendix)

### APPENDIX 2 SUPPLEMENTARY SURVEYS

#### SUPPLEMENTARY SURVEYS

The Monthly Population Survey program collects data on particular aspects of the labour force. The following is an historical list of supplementary surveys to the monthly labour force survey. Data from these surveys are available on request and can be obtained by contacting the ABS.

	cat. no.	Frequency	Latest issue
<b>Monthly Population Supplementary Surveys</b>			
Child Care, Australia	4402.0	Irregular	June 2005
Child Employment, Australia	6211.0	Irregular	June 2006
Education and Work, Australia	6227.0	Annual	May 2008
Employee Earnings, Benefits, and Trade Union Membership, Australia	6310.0	Annual	August 2008
Forms of Employment, Australia	6359.0	Annual	November 2008
Job Search Experience, Australia	6222.0	Annual	July 2008
Labour Force Experience, Australia	6206.0	Biennial	February 2009
Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Migrants, Australia	6250.0	Irregular	November 2007
Labour Mobility, Australia	6209.0	Biennial	February 2008
Locations of Work, Australia	6275.0	Irregular	November 2008
Multiple Jobholding, Australia(a)	6216.0	Irregular	August 1997
Persons Not in the Labour Force, Australia	6220.0	Annual	September 2008
Underemployed Workers, Australia	6265.0	Annual	September 2008
Working Time Arrangements, Australia(b)	6342.0	Irregular	November 2006
<b>Multi-Purpose Household Surveys</b>			
Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation, Australia	6239.0	Biennial	2006-2007
Retirement and Retirement Intentions, Australia	6238.0	Biennial	2006-2007
Work-Related Injuries, Australia	6324.0	Irregular	2005-2006

(a) Latest data available on request July 2001.

(b) This product replaces the publication Working Arrangements, Australia (cat. no. 6342.0).

## Quality Declaration - Summary

### QUALITY DECLARATION - SUMMARY

#### INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT

For information on the institutional environment of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS),

including the legislative obligations of the ABS, financing and governance arrangements, and mechanisms for scrutiny of ABS operations, please see ABS Institutional Environment.

## **RELEVANCE**

The Labour Force Experience Survey provides detailed information about the labour force activities of people aged 15 years and over during the 12 months to February of the reference year. The survey measures time spent in labour force activities, including episodes of working or looking for work, and time spent out of the labour force.

Estimates from the survey are used to monitor the extent and nature of labour force participation over an extended period and to complement estimates from the monthly Labour Force Survey in the analysis of labour market dynamics. The information is used to construct profiles of various groups within the labour force, particularly the unemployed.

Information is available on time worked during the year, whether in the labour force at some time during the year, number of employers/businesses during the year, time spent looking for work during the year, number of spells of looking for work during the year, main activity when not in the labour force, and whether had an unpaid absence from work during the year. Further information such as occupation, industry and time with current employer are presented for people who were employed at February 2009.

## **TIMELINESS**

The estimates in this publication are sourced from the Labour Force Experience Survey which is conducted biennially during February as a supplement to the monthly Labour Force Survey. Results from this survey are released in the publication, Labour Force Experience, Australia (cat. no. 6206.0), approximately six months after the collection period. The Labour Force Experience Survey is expected to be conducted again in February 2011.

## **ACCURACY**

Estimates from the Labour Force Experience Survey are subject to sampling and non-sampling errors. Relative standard error is a measure of the size of the sampling error affecting an estimate, i.e. the error introduced by basing estimates on a sample of the population rather than the full population. Non-sampling errors are inaccuracies that occur because of imperfections in reporting by respondents and interviewers, and errors made in coding and processing data. Relative Standard Errors for all estimates in the publication are available in the Technical Note.

As a result of the sample reductions in the Labour Force Survey, (see Information Paper: Labour Force Survey Sample Design, Nov 2007 (Second edition) (cat. no. 6269.0)) the sample for the Labour Force Experience Survey was approximately one-third smaller than the sample size in February 2007. This has resulted in higher relative standard errors associated with the estimates.

## **COHERENCE**

The ABS has been conducting the Labour Force Experience Survey since 1969. Since February 1995 the survey has been conducted biennially. Key recent changes made to the Labour Force Experience Survey include:

- revisions of population benchmarks
- changes in the scope of the survey
- changes in the collection of a respondent's main activity when not in the labour force.

For more information on changes to the survey see **Chapter 21.5 of Labour Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Methods** (cat. no. 6102.0.55.001) or the Explanatory Notes of the publication, Labour Force Experience, Australia (cat. no. 6206.0).

## INTERPRETABILITY

The Labour Force Experience publication contains tables with footnoted data and a Summary of Findings to aid interpretation of the results of the survey. Detailed Explanatory Notes, a Technical Note and a Glossary are also included providing information on the terminology, classifications and other technical aspects associated with these statistics.

Further commentary is often available through articles and data published in other ABS products, including:

- **Australian Labour Market Statistics** (cat. no. 6105.0) - refer to Appendix 2 for past articles.
- **Australian Social Trends** (cat. no. 4102.0) - refer to the **Cumulative list of articles** for past articles.
- **Year Book, Australia** (cat. no. 1301.0) - refer to the 'Labour' chapter.

## ACCESSIBILITY

The main product from the survey is a PDF publication, Labour Force Experience, Australia (cat. no. 6206.0), released electronically via the ABS website. Additional data may be available on request. For a list of data items available see Appendix 1 of the publication. Note that detailed data can be subject to high relative standard errors, and in some cases, may result in data being confidentialised.

For further information about these or related statistics, contact the National Information and Referral Centre on 1300 135 070 or contact Labour Market Statistics section on Canberra (02) 6252 7206, or by email to <labour.statistics@abs.gov.au>.

## Quality Declaration - Relevance

### Whether in the labour force at some time during the year

For the Labour Force Experience Survey labour force activity over a 12-month period was determined from a more limited set of questions than is used in the monthly Labour Force Survey. For this reason, the terms worked and looked for work are used, rather than the more precisely defined terms employed and unemployed, as used in the Labour Force Survey. In this survey, the concepts worked and looked for work are used to determine whether a person was in the labour force during the year. Therefore, this concept is also

based on a more limited set of questions than the Labour Force Survey.

#### Number of spells of looking for work during the year

The number of different periods, including the current period, during which a person was not working but was looking for a job.

## **Quality Declaration - Coherence**

Key changes made to Labour Force Experience Survey include:

#### REVISION OF POPULATION BENCHMARKS

Revisions are made to population benchmarks for the Labour Force Survey after each five-yearly Census of Population and Housing. The last such revision was made in February 2009 to take account of the results of the 2006 Census of Population and Housing. Estimates from supplementary surveys conducted from and including February 2009 are based on revised population benchmarks.

#### CHANGES IN THE SCOPE OF THE SURVEY

From February 2009 the Labour Force Experience Survey was conducted in both urban and rural areas in all states and territories, but excluded people living in Indigenous communities in very remote parts of Australia.

#### MAIN ACTIVITY WHEN NOT IN THE LABOUR FORCE

Prior to February 2009, the data item 'Main activity when not in the Labour Force' included the category 'home duties or child care'. From February 2009, this category has been split into two separate categories; 'home duties' and 'caring for children'.

Prior to February 2009, the data item 'Main activity when not in the Labour Force' included the categories 'own illness or injury' and 'own disability or handicap'. From February 2009, these categories have been collected as 'own short-term illness or injury' and 'own long-term health condition or disability' respectively. More information can be found in the Explanatory Notes of the publication Labour Force Experience, Australia (cat. no. 6206.0)

## **Data Quality (Technical Note)**

### **TECHNICAL NOTE DATA QUALITY**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

**1** Since the estimates in this publication are based on information obtained from occupants of a sample of dwellings, they are subject to sampling variability. That is, they may differ from those estimates that would have been produced if all dwellings had been included in the survey. One measure of the likely difference is given by the standard error (SE), which

indicates the extent to which an estimate might have varied by chance because only a sample of dwellings was included. There are about two chances in three (67%) that a sample estimate will differ by less than one SE from the number that would have been obtained if all dwellings had been included, and about 19 chances in 20 (95%) that the difference will be less than two SEs. Another measure of the likely difference is the relative standard error (RSE), which is obtained by expressing the SE as a percentage of the estimate.

**2** Due to space limitations, it is impractical to print the SE of each estimate in the publication. Instead, a table of SEs is provided to enable readers to determine the SE for an estimate from the size of that estimate (see table T1). The SE table is derived from a mathematical model, referred to as the 'SE model', which is created using data from a number of past Labour Force Surveys. It should be noted that the SE model only gives an approximate value for the SE for any particular estimate, since there is some minor variation between SEs for different estimates of the same size.

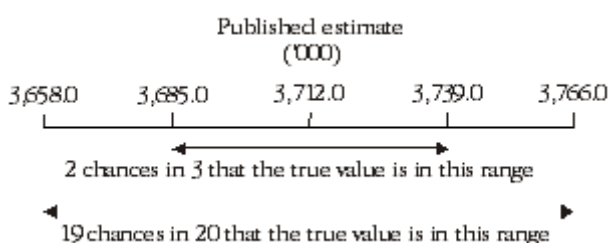
**3** The LFS sample size in February 2009 was approximately one-third smaller than the sample size in February 2007. This is due to an 11% sample reduction that was implemented from November 2007 to June 2008 based on the 2006 sample design, and an additional 24% sample reduction implemented in July 2008. In combination, the two sample reductions are expected to increase the standard errors for estimates from the supplementary surveys by approximately 22% at the broad aggregate level, relative to the 2001 sample design (standard errors will vary at lower aggregate levels). Detailed information about the sample reduction is provided in Information Paper: Labour Force Survey Sample Design, Nov 2007 (Second edition) (cat. no. 6269.0).

## CALCULATION OF STANDARD ERRORS

**4** An example of the calculation and the use of SEs in relation to estimates of people is as follows. Table 1 shows that the estimated number of people aged 15 years and over in the labour force for part of the year was 3,712,000. Since this estimate is between 2,000,000 and 5,000,000, table T1 shows that the SE for Australia will lie between 19,550 and 32,600 and can be approximated by interpolation using the following general formula:

$$\begin{aligned}
 &SE \text{ of estimate} \\
 &= \text{lower SE} + \left( \frac{\text{size of estimate} - \text{lower estimate}}{\text{upper estimate} - \text{lower estimate}} \right) \times (\text{upper SE} - \text{lower SE}) \\
 &= 19,550 + \left( \frac{3,712,000 - 2,000,000}{5,000,000 - 2,000,000} \right) \times (32,600 - 19,550) \\
 &= 27,000 \text{ (rounded to the nearest 100)}
 \end{aligned}$$

**5** Therefore, there are about two chances in three that the value that would have been produced, if all dwellings had been included in the survey, will fall within the range 3,685,000 to 3,739,000, and about 19 chances in 20 that the value will fall within the range 3,658,000 to 3,766,000. This example is illustrated in the following diagram.



**6** In general, the size of the SE increases as the size of the estimate increases. Conversely, the RSE decreases as the size of the estimate increases. Very small estimates are thus subject to such high RSEs that their value for most practical purposes is unreliable. In the tables in this publication, only estimates with RSEs of 25% or less are considered reliable for most purposes. Estimates with RSEs greater than 25% but less than or equal to 50% are preceded by an asterisk (e.g. \*3.4) to indicate they are subject to high SEs and should be used with caution. Estimates with RSEs of greater than 50%, preceded by a double asterisk (e.g. \*\*0.3), are considered too unreliable for general use and should only be used to aggregate with other estimates to provide derived estimates with RSEs of 25% or less. Table T2 presents the levels at which estimates have RSEs of 25% and 50%.

## MEANS AND MEDIANS

**7** The RSEs of estimates of mean and median duration of time spent looking for work are obtained by first finding the RSE of the estimate of the total number of people contributing to the estimate (see table T1) and then multiplying the resulting number by the following factors:

- mean duration of time spent looking for work (weeks): 0.93
- median duration of time spent looking for work (weeks): 1.04

**8** The following is an example of the calculation of SEs where the use of a factor is required. Table 7 shows that the estimated number of males aged 15 years and over who looked for work at some time during the year was 856,400 with a median duration of time spent looking for work of 10 weeks. The SE of 856,400 can be calculated from table T1 (by interpolation) as 12,300. To convert this to an RSE we express the SE as a percentage of the estimate, or  $12,300/856,400 = 1.4\%$ .

**9** The RSE of the estimate of median duration of time spent looking for work for males aged 15 years and over is calculated by multiplying this number (1.4%) by the appropriate factor shown in the previous paragraph (in this case 1.04):  $1.4 \times 1.04 = 1.5\%$ . The approximate SE of this estimate of median duration of time spent looking for work for males aged 15 years and over is therefore 1.5% of 10 weeks, i.e. about 0.2 weeks. Therefore, there are two chances in three that the median duration of time spent looking for work for males aged 15 years and over that would have been obtained if all dwellings had been included in the survey would have been within the range 9.8 weeks to 10.2 weeks, and about 19 chances in 20 that it would have been within the range 9.6 weeks to 10.4 weeks.

**10** Estimates of means and medians produced from population estimates smaller than the values provided in table T2 have RSEs larger than 25% and should be used with caution. Table T2 also indicates the size of population estimates that would produce means and medians with RSEs greater than 50%, which are considered too unreliable for general use.

## PROPORTIONS AND PERCENTAGES

**11** Proportions and percentages formed from the ratio of two estimates are also subject to sampling errors. The size of the error depends on the accuracy of both the numerator and the denominator. A formula to approximate the RSE of a proportion is given below. This formula is only valid when x is a subset of y.

$$RSE\left(\frac{x}{y}\right) = \sqrt{[RSE(x)]^2 + [RSE(y)]^2}$$



**12** Considering the example from the previous page, of the 3,712,000 people aged 15 years and over in the labour force for part of the year, 547,000, or 14.7%, looked for work at some time during the year. The SE of 547,000 may be calculated by interpolation as 9,900. To convert this to an RSE we express the SE as a percentage of the estimate, or  $9,900/547,000 = 1.8\%$ . The SE for 3,712,000 was calculated previously as 27,000, which converted to an RSE is  $27,000/3,712,000 = 0.7\%$ . Applying the above formula, the RSE of the proportion is:

$$RSE = \sqrt{(1.8)^2 - (0.7)^2} = 1.7\%$$

**13** Therefore, the SE for the proportion of people aged 15 years and over who looked for work at some time during the year is 0.2 percentage points  $(=(14.7/100) \times 1.7)$ . Therefore, there are about two chances in three that the proportion of people aged 15 years and over who looked for work at some time during the year is between 14.5% and 14.9%, and 19 chances in 20 that the proportion is within the range 14.3% to 15.1%.

## DIFFERENCES

**14** Published estimates may also be used to calculate the difference between two survey estimates (of numbers or percentages). Such an estimate is subject to sampling error. The sampling error of the difference between two estimates depends on their SEs and the relationship (correlation) between them. An approximate SE of the difference between two estimates (x-y) may be calculated by the following formula:

$$SE(x-y) = \sqrt{[SE(x)]^2 + [SE(y)]^2}$$

**15** While this formula will only be exact for differences between separate and uncorrelated characteristics or subpopulations, it is expected to provide a good approximation for all differences likely to be of interest in this publication.

## STANDARD ERRORS

### T1 STANDARD ERRORS OF ESTIMATES

Size of estimate (persons)	NSW no.	Vic. no.	Qld. no.	SA no.	WA no.	Tas. no.	NT no.	ACT no.	Aust.	
									SE no.	RSE %
100	340	330	250	200	250	130	90	120	120	120.0
200	450	430	370	270	330	180	140	190	220	110.0
300	540	510	450	320	390	220	170	240	300	100.0
500	660	620	570	390	480	270	220	310	440	88.0
700	760	710	670	450	550	310	260	350	550	78.6
1,000	880	810	780	520	630	360	300	380	700	70.0
1,500	1 030	950	930	600	730	410	350	420	890	59.3
2,000	1 150	1 060	1 040	670	820	450	390	440	1 050	52.5
2,500	1 250	1 150	1 150	750	900	500	400	450	1 200	48.0
3,000	1 350	1 250	1 200	800	950	500	450	500	1 300	43.3
3,500	1 450	1 300	1 300	800	1 000	550	450	500	1 400	40.0
4,000	1 500	1 400	1 350	850	1 050	550	500	550	1 500	37.5
5,000	1 650	1 500	1 450	950	1 150	600	550	600	1 700	34.0
7,000	1 850	1 700	1 650	1 050	1 300	700	650	650	1 950	27.9
10,000	2 150	1 950	1 850	1 200	1 500	800	850	800	2 300	23.0
15,000	2 500	2 250	2 050	1 350	1 700	950	1 150	950	2 650	17.7
20,000	2 750	2 500	2 250	1 500	1 900	1 150	1 450	1 100	2 950	14.8

30,000	3 200	2 900	2 600	1 800	2 150	1 450	2 000	1 450	3 350	11.2
40,000	3 550	3 200	2 850	2 050	2 400	1 700	2 550	1 700	3 650	9.1
50,000	3 850	3 500	3 150	2 300	2 650	1 950	3 050	1 900	3 900	7.8
100,000	4 900	4 550	4 300	3 450	3 900	2 750	5 300	2 550	4 900	4.9
150,000	5 750	5 550	5 300	4 400	5 150	3 300	7 300	2 900	5 700	3.8
200,000	6 600	6 450	6 200	5 200	6 150	3 700	9 100	3 050	6 400	3.2
300,000	8 300	8 300	7 850	6 400	7 750	4 200	12 450	3 200	7 600	2.5
500,000	11 650	11 500	10 600	8 000	9 850	4 850	..	3 200	9 550	1.9
1,000,000	17 300	17 500	15 150	10 200	12 600	5 550	..	..	13 450	1.3
2,000,000	23 300	25 850	20 350	12 100	14 550	..	..	..	19 550	1.0
5,000,000	29 700	41 350	27 450	13 650	15 200	..	..	..	32 600	0.7
10,000,000	31 800	57 000	32 100	..	..	..	..	..	43 500	0.4
15,000,000	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	49 100	0.3

.. not applicable

## T2 levels at which estimates have relative standard errors of 25% and 50% (a)

	NSW no.	Vic. no.	Qld. no.	SA no.	WA no.	Tas. no.	NT no.	ACT no.	Australia no.
<b>25% RSE</b>									
Mean duration of time spent looking for work	7 000	6 200	4 900	2 400	3 800	1 300	600	1 500	7 600
Median duration of time spent looking for work	7 900	6 800	6 300	3 000	4 700	1 700	800	1 700	9 100
All other estimates	7 800	6 700	6 300	3 200	4 400	1 700	1 400	1 700	8 600
<b>50% RSE</b>									
Mean duration of time spent looking for work	2 300	2 000	1 600	800	1 200	400	100	600	1 900
Median duration of time spent looking for work	2 600	2 200	2 100	1 000	1 600	600	200	700	2 400
All other estimates	2 500	2 200	2 100	1 000	1 400	600	400	700	2 300

(a) Refers to the number of people contributing to the estimate.